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Morris declared that "the trial of Zenger in 1735 was the germ of American freedom, the morning star of that liberty which subsequently revolutionized America."

JOHN THOMAS LEE

### A NOVEL TRANSPORTATION DEVICE

A recent request for information on the subject first brought to our attention the novel project of Norman Wiard for establishing a rapid-transit route between Prairie du Chien and St. Paul in 1859. A somewhat cursory examination of contemporary newspaper files revealed the notices of the project which follow. It seems probable that a more thorough search would disclose additional information concerning Wiard's ingenious project.

#### THE ICE BOAT<sup>1</sup>

Prairie du Chien, Dec. 1, 1859.

EDITOR COURIER. Dear Sir: As there have been many conjectures in regard to the Ice Boat published in the various newspapers of the Northwest, I thought that some definite and reliable information in regard to the invention would be of interest to the public.

Norman Wiard Esq., the inventor of the Ice Boat, is now constructing in New York City, an ice boat with a capacity for carrying twenty passengers, and will be here with it about the twentieth of December. He has proved to the satisfaction of some of the most scientific men of New York that his invention is a success.

It is intended by the parties having the route from here to Saint Paul to stock the line this winter, and to be prepared to do all business that may present itself.

The immense advantages arising to the Northwest from this invention must be apparent to all.

Yours truly, JOHN JAY CHASE

<sup>1</sup> From the Prairie du Chien *Courier*, December 1, 1859.

ICE BOATS, CHARIOTS, CUTTER—LETTER FROM MR. WIARD<sup>2</sup>

New York, Nov. 22, 1859.

169 Broadway, Room 35.

J. H. GREEN, *Editor of Leader*:

Please say to all, or as much of what I have written as you please, in your own words, for I assure you I believe it all myself, and I believe that many of your readers will be glad to have the information.

Yours truly, NORMAN WIARD.

Accordingly, we say as requested, that Norman Wiard, inventor of the Ice Boat, will be in Prairie du Chien before long with a twenty-passenger steam ice boat, which he has now in process of construction at New York, and hopes by such means to keep open communication with St. Paul and Prairie du Chien, connecting, always up to time, with the Milwaukee & Mississippi Railroad.

He will also be prepared with a pioneer machine to level a track, when it is necessary, where the ice is rough. His twenty-passenger boat can be raised or lowered, while in motion or at rest, to enable it to pass through a uniform depth of snow of three feet. It has devices that are ample and practical, by which it can pass over or through snow banks and drifts; even if it should be run into a bank of snow twenty feet in depth and there stopped, it can immediately be passed through it or over it, or be backed out with the greatest facility. It is an amphibious machine, is this Ice Boat, as it can be run off the ice at a speed of twenty miles an hour into the water with safety; and it can propel itself across the water to contact with the ice on the other side, and get out upon the ice and be put again in operation without any material delay. It is, also, almost danger-proof; for, if it should be thrown into the water by accident, on its side, or even bottom up, it would right itself instantly; and about thirty holes would have to be broken in the hull before it could be sunk, even if it were full of water.

Mr. Wiard exhibited a model of his Ice Boat at the fair of the American Institute, N. Y., and received therefor the highest award; the operations of his model corroborate the statements made above;

<sup>2</sup> From the Prairie du Chien *Leader*, December 8, 1859.

and the minutes of the Polytechnic Club, before whom he exhibited his plans at their request, says [*sic*] that the working of the model "proved his statements." The practicability of the boat itself will soon be tested on the ice of the Mississippi, and the judgment which will then be pronounced [will be] a final one.

[Corner torn off] driver only, and can go up and down hill and into the water, safely! "Please to say all this," says Mr. Wiard, "for I assure you, I believe it all!" So will we all, when we see it, and the sight is promised us.

Mr. John Cleveland, 35 Wall Street, N. Y., is now the trustee of the patent, and by the liberal subscription of a few intelligent and responsible gentlemen of that city Mr. Wiard is enabled to fully develop and test his plans. The machine he is now building is said to be beautiful as well as useful; and it seems likely to attract a number of New Yorkers to visit Prairie du Chien when Mr. Wiard brings it here.

Should this invention prove to be a practical one, Norman Wiard's name will be ranked along with that of Fulton, Stephenson, and Morse. If his machine should prove valueless, the worst that can or will be said, will be that he *deserved* success.

#### THE ICE BOAT<sup>3</sup>

The Prairie du Chien *Leader* says it is not, and never has been, the intention of Mr. Wiard to test the practicability of his invention with the boat half built last winter, and which remains in *statue* [*sic*] *quo* yet, being too large, heavy, and unwieldy for the experiment.

<sup>3</sup> From the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, December 9, 1859.